

Hiena

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Summary: AU Fic - The woods... there's strange things in the woods. Weird things, in the shadows and among the bushes. Wrong things. There's a moan on the wind, a low keening wail ending in high-pitched staccato laughter...

FINISHED - 01 14 2009 -

Chapter 1: Enter: Stage Left

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A/N:

There is a Polish movie called Hiena (2006). I have no idea whether or not it has been subtitled in English (maybe?) but I highly recommend it.

This fic has been worked around some of the ideas of that film. Some things are the same, some things have been twisted around, some have been added, and some have been taken away.

You really don't need to have watched the movie to read this fic, trust me. You don't. I still recommend it, if you can find it.

Also, this fic is being written in a very (for me) experimental style. Please let me know what you think of it. The prologue is written one way, but the main story is being written in a way that for some strange reason (really, it gives me a headache) makes me really happy. I'm having fun. I hope you do too.

Prologue is short but chapter one is getting uploaded right after, so yeah. Hope to have a new chapter up very soon.

It's been a while since I've ventured back into the world of KH fics. I'm hoping that someone at least will find this one interesting.

It is an AU fic, and it has certain members of the cast appearing. It will be weird and strange and not, er, nice...? I hope that it will be entertaining and attention catching.

We really need a psychological genre option. We really do.

Hey there, do me a favor and read the second chap while you're here? I know this one is really short, but it'll be getting more interesting. I promise. Go for it!

Review please! Reviews make the world go round!

Title: Hiena
Author: Zoshi the Confused
Rating: Ranging, mostly PG-PG13
Category: Kingdom Hearts
Genre: Psychological/Horror
May contain: Violence, Adult Situations, Swearing

Prologue

The woods... there's strange things in the Białowieża Forest. Weird things, in the shadows and among the bushes. Wrong things.

There's a moan on the wind, a low keening wail ending in high-pitched staccato laughter.

They say there's a killer in the woods, a murderer. It's a he, or it's a she, it's an it.

It eats children, they say, but really it eats anything. Children, men, women, dogs. Sheep sometimes.

They say it's a hunter gone crazy. They say it's a wolf-man. They say it's a vampire, or a deranged ice cream man. They always say it's human.

They're all wrong.

Hajnówka, Poland 1981

They were out back of the apartments splitting logs for firewood when their father died.

The ambulance-tempo siren wailed over the town from the mine, and they paused in their work, their breath clouding white in the chilly December air. Their mother came out to stand in the doorway, dirty dishcloth in one hand, the other clapped tightly over her mouth. Her eyes were wide.

The log hit the ground long after Roxas had started running, cloud-breath trailing behind him as his feet carried him up

the small hill to the building and past it onto the road. The axe thudded into the tree stump they were using as a base, and Demyx ran past his mother, now clutching the dishcloth in both hands, mouth moving silently in prayer. Roxas was far ahead of him, a dark dot in the distance, and Demyx didn't catch up to him until he reached the courtyard out front of the mining building. The younger blonde was pushing through the throng of miners exiting the building, his jacket streaked with soot and dust from the workers's clothes.

Demyx grabbed his arm, hauled the panting boy behind him as he led the way through the chaos. There was shouting, grabbing, people were pushing against them and away from them. A man was limping out of the doorway when they reached it, pausing a moment to wipe the coal dust from his face. Tear trails glistened pale on his coal-darkened face. He was shaking.

They pushed past him and towards the main offices, pausing at the entrance of the room where hurried voices were speaking into telephones, a mosquito cacophony of whispers. The head manager glanced at them, his eyes darkened, lost somewhere between here and there, but then he shook his head once, and the boys moved on.

Stragglers passed them as they sat on the bench in the entry room, men reaching up with weary arms to pull their bags off of the hooks hanging from the ceiling, steps echoing hollowly around the two blondes. The last rescue worker stumbled out of the elevator shaft, dragged his feet past them, dirty rope wound up in a coil at his waist, the light of his helmet still shining feebly. The last bag with its clean change of clothes hung above their heads, silent.

They returned to find the head manager long come and gone.

Roxas went back out to the tree stump, logs as enemies, axe as dearest friend. His anguish came out in sharp thuds and splinters, his eyes burning as his palms blistered with the force of his blows. His hands clutched the handle too tightly. The logs splintered.

Demyx listened to the thwack of metal on wood from inside the house, his mother letting the sobs escape as she leaned on his shoulder, her face buried in the thick material of his jacket. The dishcloth was held twisted in her hands, and she twisted, and twisted, even as the poor worn material began to give, began to rip and riiip and riiiiip. Roxas returned, climbed onto the couch with them and sprawled across his brother's lap, his arms around his mother's waist and his face pressed against her side, his body shaking with sobs he didn't want, didn't want to let come.

Demyx lay a hand on his brother's back, felt the shudder, felt the cold where his mother's tears were seeping through his jacket at his shoulder. He stared hollowly at the wall across from him, at the tiny statue of Jesus on the leaning shelf, at the picture of grandparents he hadn't had the chance to meet. His tears never came.

There's a hyena in the woods. It prowls among the trees, searching, always, always searching.

You aren't safe in the woods.

You're never alone.

You're lost in the woods, no matter how well you know where you are.

And at night, in the woods?

The moon is always full.

Chapter 2: The Lost Souls

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A/N:

Okay, chapter one isn't the longest chapter in the history of writing. Oh well. I refuse to end chapters at a set amount of words/pages/etc. They end where they need to end, and that's that.

Enjoy! I hope you do, please let me know what you think of this style of writing.

Things get interesting next chap. Ohohoho.

Review and I'll give you cookies. Chocolate and Peanut butter chip cookies. MMMmmm..

It is three years later and it is summer and Roxas is sixteen and sitting on the wall stretching between his apartment building and the one next to it. Hayner is next to him, licking the last ice cream off of the stick and tossing it back over the wall. He is in a mood that day, and he is talking about things like he wants everyone to know that he is the first to ever talk of them like that.

"Czy wiesz, coś wysiadł z zoo," Hayner says, his voice low and dangerous. Kairi and Olette shudder, scared little smiles coming to their faces, and Pence pauses in licking his popsicle,

"Co to za coś, Hayner?" He asks, eyes wide as the popsicle drips anti-freeze blue onto his fingers. Hayner grins.

"Mówią, że to pantera," Hayner turns to Roxas, for approval, or recognition. "Czarna."

"Och, nie. To nieprawda." Olette giggles, leaning against the wall and looking to Kairi for reciprocation.

"Tak Hayner, że nie może być prawda." But Kairi leans forward, just a little bit, eyes interested.

"To prawda. Mówią, że to jest tak czarny, że to ciemniejsze od nocy, a porusza się tak szybko i tak cicho, że nie wiem, że to na ciebie ", aż zęby są na gardle." Hayner grips at his own throat, and the girls squeal at the thought. Pence turns his attention back to his melting popsicle.

Roxas isn't listening. He is looking at the pale-haired girl sitting on a stone a few feet away from the wall. She isn't exactly apart from the group, but she isn't exactly a part of it either. She's just there, doodling in the back of a beat up notebook. Hayner's voice is getting louder in his ear, but Roxas doesn't care. The girl looks up for a moment, pencil paused above paper, and her eyes meet his for a fraction of a second. She looks down again, and that's all it is, just a look, not a *look*, and Roxas is annoyed. He doesn't know her name, and she doesn't talk, and he isn't sure if he really wants to ask, even though he knows he does. Hayner knows Roxas isn't listening, but Roxas doesn't care. He's thinking about the girl, and about what her name might be, and about just what it could be she is drawing in that notebook of hers.

"Och, hej, spójrz, to jest pan Ditz wreszcie wyruszeniem do domu z głupim farmie," Hayner's voice is loud, and Roxas looks up to see Demyx heading down the road towards home, his dark jeans caked with sawdust in some places. Roxas knows Hayner knows he hears him, and he knows that his brother can hear him as well, but Roxas doesn't say anything, not even when the girls give nervous little laughs.

Demyx never says anything either, and sometimes that makes Roxas angry. He thinks he might know what he's supposed to do if only Demyx gave him a clue, but he doesn't. He's actually angry about a lot of things when it comes to his brother. Demyx is nineteen. Demyx should be in trade school or something. Demyx shouldn't be slaving away ten hours a day at the town's saw mill, choking on sawdust and standing dangerously close to equipment that could tear him apart in seconds. Not now. Not ever, and especially not when he demands that Roxas keep his high school summers free. Roxas doesn't want free summers; he wants his brother home. He wants his father home too, for that matter, but that's buried deep in his mind and forgotten. Roxas wants to help; Roxas wants to grow up, but Demyx won't let him, and he loves his brother for it and hates him for it at the same time. By the time Demyx reaches the wall, Roxas's mind is in turmoil again, but it always is, and he doesn't find it strange anymore.

"Hey guys," Demyx's voice is rough from the dust clogging his throat. He smiles easily, although a bit vacantly. He knows the kids don't really care for him, but he keeps up appearances for Roxas's sake. He knows he's an idiot, even though he knows he isn't one and just comes out like one sometimes. He can live with the truth, even if the truth isn't all that truthful.

The kids grin and wave and glare. The girls even say hi, smiling shyly; they might think Demyx is stupid, but they also think he looks gorgeous, even in sawdust caked jeans. Roxas thinks they swoon a little too much over Demyx's ocean blue eyes and genial smile, and he's already made a promise to himself that he'll never let harpies like them anywhere near his brother.

"Chodźmy do domu," Roxas says, hopping off of the wall and onto the ground below. The sun is low in the sky and the horizon is glinting red. He hears Hayner huff behind him but he doesn't pay him any mind. He turns to give his friends a grin and wave and walks off towards the main entrance next to his brother.

"Hayner mówi, że pantera luźne," Roxas says, swirls his spoon in his soup. It's rice soup, but actually it's the chicken soup they had yesterday with rice boiled in it. It's good, but he doesn't feel like eating, and when he sees Demyx finish he shoves his bowl next to his brother's and looks at his mother, chin on his hand and elbows on the table. Demyx doesn't say anything about it, even though he wants to, because he doesn't want Roxas to be angry. Their mother sighs and smiles softly and gives Roxas a look that tells him she's really listening and if it looks like she isn't it is just because she is tired.

"Czarna, mówi. Czarniejsza niż noc," Roxas continues. Demyx snorts, a wry grin flickering onto his face between spoonfuls.

"Naprawdę, drogi?" Their mother sounds amused. She spoons the soup slowly into her mouth. Her face has gotten wrinkled a bit. Her eyes look old. She smiles. "I to jest w naszych lasach, założę się,?"

"To jest to, co mówię," Roxas grins and rolls his eyes. He looks at his brother. "W zeszłym tygodniu było żyrafa na placu zabaw."

Demyx laughs at that; he knows his brother is friends with Hayner, but he also knows that he's friends with him because he doesn't really have a choice. He isn't worried about Roxas, not too much. He knows he can usually take care of himself if he has to. Demyx is just worried that the one time Roxas won't be able to, he won't be there. Demyx finishes his soup and gathers up the empty dishes, but Roxas grabs them before he can get up, and he sighs as his brother carries them over to the sink. He feels tired and he feels old but he grins when Roxas turns around and he looks up at the clock hanging over the couch.

"To po siedmiu," Demyx says, glancing over at their mother. She gives the tiniest of nods, and he looks at his brother. "Chcesz iść na spacer?"

"Pewnie," Roxas is happy. He is grinning wide and he rushes over to the front door and starts pulling his shoes on. Demyx follows him, reaches over him to take his jacket off of the coat rack. Evenings are chilly, and his throat and lungs are bad enough as they are without him catching a cold. He pulls the jacket on and Roxas pulls on his dark grey ushanka as Demyx puts on his shoes and then they're out the door.

Roxas is laughing as they head down the stairs, he is talking animatedly about everything he'd done that day, and Demyx is happy. He's happy his brother is living life, and he's happy he can give him that much. The air outside is fresh and crisp; the sun is well past the horizon but there is still a faint red glow in the sky and the sliver of new moon hangs just barely over the trees past the line of buildings. There are empty and boarded up windows in many of the buildings, unlit and unused. Old furniture stands outside one building, last remnants of a family escaping a dying town. Demyx knows their town is dying, but he doesn't think Roxas does. He hopes Roxas doesn't find out until he is well on his way to living in the outside world. He doesn't think the boy needs that kind of burden.

The boys pass between the high walls at the edge of the town. They used to be part of a larger wall that encircled what had once been a small village, but time and weather had done their part. Roxas runs his hand across ancient stones as they walk, his fingers catching in crevices and prying up moss. Demyx leads their way down the worn path to the forest edge. The air here is cleaner, and it isn't until he can pick up the scent of leaves and crushed grass that Demyx really believes that he still knows how to breathe. He is happy here; this air is his medicine. There is a stream not far along the path, and they turn to follow it a short distance to where it connects to another path. The evening is growing darker, but they feel safe in each other's presence. Demyx pauses at the edge of the new path to crouch down beside the water's edge and gather some up in his cupped hands, raise it to his lips and drink it and feel it wash away the dust and grime and leave him feeling refreshed, renewed. Roxas grins an evil younger brother grin and leans over, splashes water on his brother before laughing and running off down the new path.

Demyx wipes the water off of his face, grinning, and takes up the chase. They run, laughing and yelling at each other, until Demyx catches up to his brother and grabs him and holds him tight and starts to spin him around. Roxas is laughing and screaming and kicking, and Demyx makes like he's going to throw Roxas to the ground but he doesn't, and

the younger blond breaks away, punches his brother in the arm and they laugh some more. The evening is deep and dark and they head down the path more by memory than by actual sight. There is moonlight filtering through the leaves of the oaks and elms around them, strong moonlight, but they don't think it's strange.

Roxas takes a turn ahead of Demyx, nearly vanishing, and there's a strange sense of foreboding that suddenly catches hold of the older boy. He reaches out and grabs hold of Roxas's arm, stops him in his tracks and walks up to stand next to him.

They aren't alone.

Ahead on the path, back towards them, stands a man, lit by the moonlight. He has a hunting rifle slung over his shoulder on a strap and a dark knit cap pulled onto his head and he is dressed dark and his boots look worn. He doesn't seem to have noticed them, and Demyx begins to pull Roxas back the way they came from when the man suddenly turns to face them. Red hair, turned dark maroon in the evening's light, peeks haphazardly out from under his hat. His eyes are acid green, glistening and cat like, reflective like mirrors. There are marks on his cheeks, right under his eyes, but it's hard to tell what they are in the weak light. He has a slight grin on his face.

Demyx feels himself shudder. He doesn't want to be here, and he knows without knowing that he needs to get Roxas and himself away. His blood is ice cold in his veins and he knows that there is something wrong with the man in front of them.

"Daj spokój," He says, gruffly because he can't say it any other way, and he pulls at Roxas's arm, but the younger boy isn't moving. The man grins slyly, shifts his stance and hooks his thumbs in his belt loops. His rifle sways slightly on his back.

"Należy słuchać swojego brata, dziecko," The man's eyes are on Roxas. His voice is low, "Nie ma złych rzeczy czyhających na las w nocy."

Roxas isn't scared. He looks the man in the eyes without flinching and he doesn't understand why his brother is clutching his arm so tightly. He smirks.

"Co, jak pantery?" Roxas asks. Demyx knows that tone and he knows he needs to get his brother moving soon. The man's grin widens and he barks a laugh, sharp and echoing among the trees around them.

"Tak, dzieciak," The man is answering the younger boy, but his eyes travel to Demyx. His voice drops lower. "jak pantery."

Demyx feels his insides shift, his stomach clench. He feels sick and he feels dirty and he doesn't understand why. He moves backwards and drags Roxas along with him, turning the younger boy around and shoving him ahead of him on the path. Roxas looks back at him, surprised and worried but something he sees in his brother's face tells him to keep quiet and keep moving.

Demyx is shuddering. He looks back before they reach the turn and he sees that the man is gone and he doesn't feel better at all. He rushes them onward and his breathing is coming fast and he's ignoring the looks Roxas keeps sending him and all the way home he feels like someone is watching him.

Chapter 3: A Long Road to Perdition

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A/N:

This chapter is twice as long as the last chapter! Hells yeah!

Yay for upping the rating. I mean, yeah. Here we go, Mature rating. Here. We. Go.

Anyways, I don't know how many people are reading this. I hope someone is, and I hope someone feels like replying.

For further reference, the rifle is a Mauser 98k WWII era German infantry rifle used by the Wehrmacht that is modified for hunting use. In other words, this, without the scope: [tinyurl. Com/ ybo96va](http://tinyurl.com/ybo96va) (remove spaces please).

There is a reason the rating has changed to M. There is a very good reason. If you are under the age of 16 I do not take any blame for any corruption that might happen to your mind.

On that note, let's begin!

Oh, and **Review**? Please? I have a surplus of cookies and French pastry. I'll share.

Roxas is walking along the fallen tree trunk with his arms held out at his sides to balance him. Hayner is a few steps in front of him, wobbling and laughing at something Olette has just said. Kairi is behind Roxas, and every now and then she reaches out to touch his back and steady herself. Pence is already waiting at the far end of the tree trunk, scuffing the toe of his shoe in the dirt and grinning. There's a slight dip at their right, where the bank slopes down to the stream that winds its way out of the forest. Up ahead trees shade the well packed dirt road, and Hayner then Roxas then Kairi hop off at the end of the tree and fall into step with Pence and Olette and head on. A few birds are calling overhead, and Roxas looks up to try to find them. He sees nothing but leaves outlined in the midday sun.

"Słyszałem, jak ktoś złamał blokadę na drzwi do bunkra," Pence says. He is fiddling with his new watch.

"Oznacza to, że możemy tam wejść, prawda?" Kairi asks, eyes bright. Hayner laughs.

"Oczywiście, jeśli nie masz nic przeciwko duchy tam. Po prostu, kiedy najmniej się tego spodziewasz," Hayner curls his fingers like claws and jumps towards Olette. She squeals and dodges behind Roxas. Roxas smiles.

"Nie ma czegoś takiego jak duchy, Hayner," Roxas says, matter-of-fact and confident. Hayner raises an eyebrow and leans on the blond's shoulder with one elbow. He is a few inches taller and he likes showing it off as often as he can.

"Naprawdę??" Hayner leans closer. "Naaaaaaaprawdę?"

"Tak, naprawdę," Roxas snickers and pushes Hayner's arm off of his shoulder. The other boy laughs and pushes him forward.

"Cóż, w takim razie, dlaczego nie możesz być pierwszą osobą, która go w? wszystko alooone." Hayner smiles and gives Roxas another shove. Roxas rolls his eyes. They're almost at the bunker doors.

"Roxas, nie rób tego," Pence shakes his head slowly, his eyes wide. Kairi and Olette giggle. Roxas lets out a sigh and turns to face his friends.

"Poważnie. To stary bunkier. Nie ma nic o nim straszne." Roxas says, places his hands on his hips.

"To chyba wszystko ciemno, że nie," Pence says, voice low. Hayner turns back to the girls.

"Tak, i pełne szczerów i pajaków i wszelkiego rodzaju robactwa," He makes a face, and the girls squeal again. Roxas throws his hands up in the air and surrenders.

"Pójdę, a ja udowodnię Ci nic tam straszny," Roxas says, and turns to head towards the bunker doors. Hayner follows after him, the rest not far behind. They stop at the doors and Roxas goes on alone.

The left bunker door is cracked open. Roxas walks up and pulls the handle, but the door doesn't budge. He grabs the handle in both hands and pulls and the heavy iron door shifts and groans and it finally moves far enough to let some sun shine in. He glances back at his friends.

"Roxas, czekać," Pence walks towards him, taking the watch from off of his wrist. It is digital, and he holds it out and points to one of the buttons on the side. "To będzie świecić po naciśnięciu tam. Wiesz, jeśli potrzebują światła, czy coś."

Hayner rolls his eyes and puts his hands behind his head, but Roxas grins and takes the offered watch.

"Dzięki Pence. Nie martw się, będę się w trochę," Roxas says, then turns and walks into the bunker.

A long shaft of light stretches out before him. There are shadows beyond that, patches of darker darkness. Roxas steps casually down the long entrance hallway, his footsteps echoing down the length. He isn't scared, and he isn't worried. The hallway he is in is part of the original cave that had once been there. When the war started, the natural cave was widened, lengthened, padded with concrete and iron. There are iron rails embedded in the middle of the hallway, and Roxas walks along them until he reaches a wall. He'll remember the rails for when he wants to leave, and he presses the button on the watch and shines it on the wall.

There is a dark rectangle to his right, and he moves the soft glow towards it as he walks over. It is another door, still iron but lighter. It is closed but Roxas manages to push it open and he shoves it across the floor and walks into the next room. There is another hallway and he thinks there may be more doorways but he can't see too well in the darkness and the glow of the watch doesn't reach that far. He walks forward and sees a desk standing next to a wall. There is no chair but there is a lamp, and he walks over to it and taps on the dusty metal lampshade. The metal resounds dully, and he moves on, walking slowly with his right hand on the right wall and the watch glowing softly in his left. He has to press the button on the watch's side every few steps but it doesn't bother him too much.

Roxas reaches the first doorway on his right and the door is open and swung wide. There are a few papers on the floor, dusty and dark with age, but otherwise the room is empty. He moves onward through the hallway, his footsteps echoing hollowly. He slows his steps, stopping to listen. He thinks he might have heard another pair of footsteps, but he can't be sure, and as the echoes die down there is only silence. He continues on to the next doorway, this one with the door only cracked open. He pushes the door open the rest of the way and the hinges squeak. There is a chair on its side inside and the metal frame from a bed. There is no mattress, but there is a broken picture frame on the other side and a metal box. Roxas toes it onto its side, but it is empty.

He heads back into the hallway, and for a moment he thinks he sees something from the corner of his eye, further on in the darkness. He frowns and moves on, believes he is just seeing things. The darkness seems to be fluctuating further down the hallway, even more so when he shines the glow of the watch in front of him. The next dark rectangle he reaches isn't a doorway but a branching in the hallway. It is a smaller corridor, rough hewn from dark stone, and it slopes downward. There is the slight smell of dank moisture coming from it, and Roxas thinks he feels a slight breeze wafting by. He is intrigued.

He walks down the corridor and he can feel the moisture gathering in the air the lower he goes. The corridor begins to turn slightly to the right as he walks on, and every now and then he steps on something crunchy. There is moss on the walls and on the floor and there is a sound coming from deeper down the corridor. He's not sure what it sounds like, a little like heavy breathing and a little like a low growl, but it doesn't sound like an animal at all. He's just around the curve and just far enough so that he can't see the entrance when he turns back when he hears the doubled footsteps again. He stops abruptly, and although there is nothing after that except rapidly fading echoes he is sure this time that someone else is there. He frowns and thinks it is Hayner trying to scare him and he turns around to face the darkness behind him. The watch goes out and he hits the button again. He wants to keep going down the stone corridor but he's thinking that he's been in there for a very long while and he should probably get back before the girls get too scared. He sighs and glances behind him down the curving corridor and thinks that he'll be back soon to explore some more.

Roxas heads back where he'd come from. The parts of the stone floor beneath his feet where the moss sits are slippery, and he's careful as he walks. The doubled footsteps start up again after he's gone a few feet, and he knows he's being followed. It confuses him, because the footsteps were behind him before he'd turned around as well. He decides there is something strange going on with the echoes in that corridor and ignores the footsteps and heads towards the slightly lighter rectangle that he's just starting to see. He sighs and looks around carefully to get his bearings. There is the smallest rectangle of pale light at one end, and he turns towards it, placing his left hand on the wall to his left. After a few minutes he approaches the door he had opened and finds it closed. It gives him pause, and he thinks he is heading the wrong way. He stops and pushes the door open, and sees the overturned chair and the bare bed frame and the empty metal box and he knows he's going the right way. He pulls the door closed again and walks onward to the door he knows was opened. He finds it pushed shut but not closed all the way, and there is a glimmer of flickering light all around the edge where the door is opened just a crack. His hand is sweaty around the watch but he doesn't think about that, and puts his eye to the crack. The light is bright and hot and it hurts his eye, and it outlines a figure, tall and dark and motionless and with a rifle on its back.

He pulls back in surprise, grits his teeth. His free hands pushes the door open and he steps inside to find the room dark

and empty except for a few time-darkened papers on the floor. He looks around suspiciously, shining the watch light on the walls and on the ceiling above him. Nothing is changed. He backs out of the room and closes the door carefully behind him. The rectangle of dim light is to his right and he moves toward it much more quickly than he had been planning. He hears footsteps that aren't his own but he isn't going to run even though his heart is pounding in his chest. He doesn't believe in ghosts and he doesn't believe in the supernatural and there is no such thing as the boogeyman. He reaches the doorway and he dashes through it and he skids across the rails in the floor and lands on his rear and knocks the breath out of himself. He winces and picks himself back up and this time he does hear those other footsteps. He refuses to look behind him and he walks towards the rectangle of bright light where his friends are waiting. He walks as normally as he can although those steps echo behind him, and though the hallway is longer than he remembers he makes it to the end. He is clutching the watch tightly in his hand, but he pauses before the doors and the footsteps are echoing all around him. He thinks of his friends, and he walks outside.

"Roxas, gdzie byłeś?" Pence calls out. Roxas grins at him as best he can and hands him the watch.

"Dzięki, że przydała," Roxas tries to get the echoes of footsteps out of his head and turns to the girls.

"Tak, jak to było?" Kairi asks, stepping closer. Olette nods and stands next to her, and Roxas shrugs.

"Wiesz, to był stary i zakurzony i były tam pokoje i takie tam," Roxas says. Hayner is giving him a curious look.

"To jest?" Hayner says, looking a little annoyed.

"Dość dużo." Roxas thinks of the stone corridor and the lit room and the footsteps but he doesn't mention them.

"Kulawy." Hayner is visibly disappointed, and he turns on his heel and leads the way back on the path. "Chodź, idziemy trochę lody czy coś."

"Tam nie było nic dziwnego tam dzieje?" Pence asks as they head off, walking close to Roxas. The blond shrugs and shakes his head and Pence sighs. "Geeze, nic ciekawego się nie dzieje tutaj."

"Tak prawdziwe," Hayner groans, "To jest takie nudne."

They turn back towards town and Roxas is looking back up at the branches above them and trying to ignore the feeling that someone is watching him. The girls are chattering along happily, and Hayner and Pence are talking about something. Roxas is feeling better out in the air and the light. He thinks his imagination has been getting the better of him and he should be fine by the time he gets home.

"Chłopaki! Chłopaki, czekać!"

Selphie is running up behind them, and Roxas turns with his friends as she nears. She is panting and her eyes are wide. There are tear stains on her cheeks and her eyes are watery and she wipes the back of one hand across her face.

"Selphie, co się dzieje?" Olette dashes forward to the other girl, and Kairi is close behind.

"To pani Gainsborough," Selphie's voice is shaky. "Ona ... ona nie żyje."

"Co?" Kairi gasps. Olette puts her hands on her mouth.

"Chciałem ją zobaczyć, aby zobaczyć, czy te nowe irysy kwitły," Selphie sniffles, "Były policji wszędzie, i nie pozwól mi odejść w."

"Czy oni coś powiedzieć??" Hayner asks, stepping forward.

"N ... Nie, ale słyszałem ich rozmowy o ... o paw drukuje lub coś?" Selphie's eyes are sad and there's tears trailing down her face again. "Nie rozumiem. Nic takiego nigdy nie zdarzyło się przed."

Roxas isn't sure how he feels about the matter. He's never really gotten to know Ms. Gainsborough and he doesn't know what kind of person she was. He's bothered by her death and bothered more by the mention of paw prints, but he still thinks Hayner's tale of panthers is stupid. The girls are comforting each other and Hayner is squinting at something in the distance and Pence is playing with his watch again. Roxas is feeling cold even though the day is warm and he suddenly does not want to be there anymore.

"Jestem ... Mam zamiar wrócić do domu." Roxas says, and even though the others give him strange looks he turns and walks on towards the town. He feels eyes on his back and he feels like there is one pair too many but he keeps walking.

His head has been hurting ever since he heard about Ms. Gainsborough during lunch break. Demyx is tired and he is not feeling well and he's coughing a bit but he's hanging in there. He doesn't like death and he doesn't like thinking about it, but it seems that when it hits it hits close to home. He had helped Ms. Gainsborough in her garden before when he was younger, and while he hasn't been there in ages he remembers her as a kind and patient lady with a pleasant, warm smile. He is sad she is gone but he feels detached all the same, and he's not sure how he's supposed to act if someone asks him what he thinks. It seems like he had known her in some other life, not this one, and he is scared by just how cold he can be towards the whole thing if he only puts some effort into it.

He meets the Professor near at the crossroads where the road from the sawmill meets with the one leading further out to the city. His hair is a dark silver and his skin is tanned brown and his eyes are an exotic shade of amber, and when he speaks it's like he's speaking a different language, but Demyx can understand him all the same. Demyx thinks it's the Professor's accent that does it, a slight lilt of sophistication that just doesn't occur in his town. The Professor isn't an occupant, after all, just a visitor. He comes for short stays in the town, visits the woods on warm summer evenings, and dashes back to the city when duty calls again.

The Professor is with the police captain, and Demyx smiles as cordially as he can with his head pounding so bad. He has been wary of Officer Xaldin and wary of the baton at his hip ever since he'd been caught nicking apples from the church garden four years earlier, and though both of the men smile at him Demyx hurries on past them and onward down the road towards home.

He is thinking of the poor lady again and thinking of paw prints and murder theories and he's not feeling well at all. The woods are to his left and if he looks hard enough he can see the stream between the tree trunks. It's just past six and the sun isn't heating the world like it was earlier but he's sweating all the same. He slows and slows and then pauses on the path, his eyes drawn to the faint glimmer of light on softly flowing water. He's wavering but he's feeling stuffy and he's sure that just one drink will get him going again. There is no path into the woods here so he picks his way carefully. He isn't sure if there is a bank here or not, he can't seem to remember.

He is grabbing hold of a young tree when a sharp bark comes from the woods, not human and not animal but something otherworldly. It doesn't echo and he shudders, and he thinks it's just his imagination but it barks again, and drags off in a wail that seems to surround him. He turns, he doesn't know where the sound is coming from, and his boot slips and then he knows there's a bank, a steep one at that. He is rolling and thudding down to the stream and it's not far but he's out of the breath when he hits the water. His pants are soaked and his shirt is soaked and that wail is turning into a cackle and fading away. He shudders, he feels cold but his head feels hot. He pushes himself out of the stream and onto the bank, looks up with water-blinded eyes. There's a figure among the trees, a silhouette in black with shockingly blue hair, and that doesn't seem right. Demyx shakes his head and looks again but there is nothing but tree shadows and the leaning bough of a low elm. He pushes himself up into a kneeling position and he tries to get his bearings. He knows where he was but he can't seem to find the way to go, he is confused and his head is pounding and his wet clothes feel cold against his skin. There is mud on his hands and he wipes them on his shirt and puts them to his temples and closes his eyes.

"Cóż, to było dość ubrań tam wziąć."

The voice is familiar in a way that sends shudders down his spine, and Demyx's eyes snap open and he looks up and it is the redheaded man. He has no hat and his hair is a messy halo of violent spikes. His eyes still glow that acid green and he is smirking and the rifle is in his hands. The rifle is in his hands and it's pointed straight at Demyx's forehead and the blond is shaking.

"Gdzie jest twój brat??" The redheaded man asks, his voice is soft but the smirk is still on his face. Demyx is caught off guard; he isn't sure what the man wants to hear.

"H ... Strona główna?" Demyx is confused. He tries to move to get up, but the rifle hovers closer to his face and he drops back down to his knees. He had forgotten about the rifle for a moment but he has remembered it now. He starts coughing and he feels the mud caking around his knees and he looks up at the man again.

"Och? Nie brzmi zbyt pewny..." The redheaded man's eyes glint strangely. Demyx thinks he hears something on the wind, but there isn't any wind really and he can't be sure. "Jesteś pewny?"

Demyx is eyeing the rifle that is pointing now at one of his eyes and is wondering if he is missing something. He is always missing something and he gets the uneasy feeling that this man knows something he doesn't, something about Roxas that he doesn't, and he's worried. He's worried because the man has a gun in his face and a smirk and he's asking about his brother. Demyx doesn't like that he's asking about his brother.

"Co cię to obchodzi??" He manages to sound gruff. The redheaded man grins wickedly and presses the tip of the rifle's barrel to the side of Demyx's face and makes him turn his head.

"Lubię blondynki ... chociaż ..." The redheaded man says, his voice dropping low, "Wolę je trochę młodszy. Jesteś już prawie za stary, by być ciekawe ..."

Demyx's eyes are wide and he thinks he knows what the man is implying but he doesn't at the same time. He doesn't like the strange glint in the man's eyes and the widening smirk on the man's face.

"Ledwo interesujące. Naprawdę, myślę, że mogę go szukać czegoś bardziej interesujące, a nie," The redheaded man smirks and pulls the rifle's muzzle away from Demyx's face. He is looking amused and Demyx is shaking more because he's sure he knows what the man is talking about now and he knows it would never end well. He doesn't know what he's doing and he can't find his voice so he shakes his head instead.

"O nie?" The redhead feigns surprise. He presses the muzzle of the rifle against the blond's mouth and he is pressing it hard against his lips and he is smirking again. "Co zamierzasz zrobić, aby zmienić zdanie?"

Demyx would respond but his head is pounding and he's feeling hot again and the muzzle of the rifle is pressing and twisting against his lips and it's hurting and he jerks back but the man thrusts it forward and into his mouth and he gags. The metal tastes cold and sharp on his tongue and he doesn't want this and he clenches his fingers in the mud by his knees and pulls back.

"Można zatrzymać, jeśli chcesz," The redheaded man says in a low voice. His eyes glitter like daggers and Demyx thinks of Roxas and he thinks of what might happen and he feels sick deep down inside. He shakes his head and his teeth clatter against metal and he whimpers. The barrel is shoved deeper, it is pressing down hard against his tongue and the front sight is scratching against the roof of his mouth.

"Zastanawiam się, co to by wyglądać," The redheaded man is musing, the barrel turns in Demyx's mouth and the sight is cracking against his molars now. The blond feels like he's choking and his tongue is convulsing and he's shuddering and shuddering. The redheaded man's grin is crooked and he shifts his stance. "Bang, a czerwony i szary poplamiony całego."

Demyx whimpers again and the man twists the rifle back. Demyx tastes blood and it is copper and iron in his mouth and down his throat and he is coughing around the barrel. The redheaded man chuckles and his eyes are narrowed and the setting sun is behind him and the light coming through the tree branches is setting his hair on fire. His eyes glitter dangerously and he is enjoying this.

"Pas," The redheaded man says. Demyx's fingers clench in the mud and he is slow to unclench them and slow to bring them to his belt buckle but the man looks like he has all the time in the world. The blond's fingers slip over the metal of his belt buckle and he is having a hard time getting a grip on it but then he is able to grip it and pull at it and he has it loose now and he is barely able to breathe.

"Spodnie," The redheaded man's smirk is looking more like a leer. Demyx's hands shake and he closes his eyes. His fingers find the button on his jeans and he is pulling the zipper down and his lungs are burning he has the zipper down but he can't do much more kneeling in the mud as he is. The rifle barrel is pulled out of his mouth suddenly and he can breathe and he begins to cough again, he is unable to catch his breath at first. The redheaded man is stepping closer and Demyx winces and then he is spun around and nearly thrown to the ground and he is throwing his hands out to keep himself from falling face first into the mud at the bank of the stream.

Demyx smells sulfur and smoke and this time he does hear something in the air, a low growl just barely heard under the sound of the redheaded man's humming. He doesn't know what he is expecting but it isn't the feel of cold metal invading him, ripping into him, and he cries out and his arms give out and tears sting his eyes and he drops to his elbows and he'd drop further he'd fall on the ground but the redheaded man is holding the back of his work shirt and is pulling at him and keeping his head up. The collar of his shirt is cutting into his throat and Demyx is having a hard time breathing again and he is whimpering with each breath. The redheaded man is still humming an amused tune and the growl is still somewhere out there, somewhere around him. Demyx is biting his tongue and his fingers are clenching in the mud and weeds at the streams edge and the metal moves and he is being cut apart he is being torn apart he knows it, knows it with the rough jagged way the metal is moving in him and he is reaching the point where his eyes are open but he can't see anything in front of him. The stench of sulfur is thick around him and he is fading and there is nothing but the burning in his throat and lungs and the pain, pain, pain tearing through him and he doesn't know where he is and what is happening and there is something warm, there is something warm trickling down, down, and the metal is moving easier and then it just isn't anymore. It is gone and he is shaking violently and he is seared inside, he's flayed alive he knows it. There is a slight thud to his left and he is hoping it is over he is praying it is over oh god oh god oh god let it be over. A

rough hand pushes his face to the ground and he breathes in mud and he knows that it is just beginning.

Roxas is sitting curled up on the couch with a bowl of dry cereal and the TV turned to a movie filled with static. The antenna is sitting wrong but he isn't paying attention to it and he isn't paying much attention to the bowl of cereal either. It is almost eight and his brother isn't home yet and he isn't worried because Demyx is a big boy after all. He isn't worried even a bit. His mother had said that maybe his brother is out with friends and is already in bed so she can get up for work in the morning and Roxas is trying to remember which friends of his brother's he knows and he can't think of any names or faces.

The front door opens with a creak and Roxas sits up straighter on the couch and hears the familiar booted footsteps of his brother and he relaxes. He is waiting as his brother walks in through the small entryway and he smiles at him when he finally appears and Demyx smiles back but it is strained and Roxas feels a flutter of worry. His brother is moving like he is put together all wrong and he walks over to their small bathroom and he closes the door behind him and he locks it, and it is then that Roxas is really worried. He slips off the couch and he is padding over as silently as he can to the bathroom door. He is leaning in against the door and he puts his ear to it and he listens to his brother cry.

Chapter 4: Te Semper Diabolus Inveniat

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A/N:

Whoohoo, next chapter. Aren't we all excited now? Yeah, took me a while. Sorry, Christmas lights had to go up and we still have the tree to do, and my room is in a constant state of disarray (thanks in part to the ferrets three) so things are just craaaaazy over here.

Anyways, things are moving in a forward sort of direction here. Things are happening, and there are things that are going to be connecting, and yes I do enjoy writing cryptically here in the Author's Notes, have you noticed?

Thank you for the Fav and the Alert, I'm happy to hear someone out there is enjoying this!

Thanks to:

Meka – I appreciate your review very much! I'm glad you're enjoying this so far, especially since this story is so experimental for me. I hope you'll enjoy the next chapters as well.

Review and get candy! Awesome candy! I promise, I don't have a creepy van, just yummy candy.

Roxas is drifting in and out of sleep as his brother gets ready for work. The shades in the room are drawn and it is six in the morning and Demyx sits on the edge of the bed they still share because there is no space for another in the room and pulls on his socks. Roxas is blearily staring at the wall in front of his face and he is wondering about the evening before. He isn't able to keep his thoughts straight and he is slipping back into sleep when he feels a hand on his shoulder. He turns around and finds Demyx looking at him from above. His brother is dressed in his coat already, and his eyes are wide awake and he looks worried.

"Roxas," He says and Roxas blinks and pushes himself up on his shoulders and looks at his brother, "Nie idź dzisiaj w lesie."

"Co ... co??" Roxas is confused and Demyx's hand tightens on his shoulder.

"Po prostu ... po prostu, nie." Demyx says, and he doesn't talk more just lifts his hand to Roxas's head and ruffles his hair and then he is gone and Roxas falls back asleep.

The pain is coming back. Demyx had snuck the painkiller from his mother's medicine cabinet early that morning but now it is nearing eleven and the medication is wearing off and he is hurting again. The sound of the saw is loud through his safety earmuffs and the air he is breathing through his mask was stale and it is making it hard for him to breathe and he is trying not to cough too much. He is focused on guiding the log through the guards towards the large rotating saw and he is trying not to get distracted by the foreman leading a pair of out-of-towners around the mill but he is anyway.

The man is tall and his hair is blond and slicked back and his beard and moustache are thin. He is talking animatedly with the foreman and Demyx isn't able to hear him but he seems like he is enjoying the visit. He is dressed sharp and he doesn't look like he belongs. His companion is a woman and she is shorter and blond and she is violently beautiful in the way mountain cats are just before they maul someone. Her eyes are sharp and she is engaged in the conversation just as much as the man is although she is looking around at the workers and the equipment more than she is looking at the foreman. Then she is looking at Demyx and winking and he is looking quickly back down at the log and trying to ignore the blush and trying to focus on work and when he looks up Johnny is walking by and he is chuckling and giving him a grin and Demyx is ignoring him as well.

The foreman is passing by with the two out-of-towners and the log is coming close to the end. Demyx is making sure it goes through right and Tom is checking to make sure the pieces fall to the right sides and then they're shutting off the machine and watching the saw blade slow down with a dying whine and cleaning up and the rest of the mill is doing so as well. It is nearing break time and Demyx's mind goes on auto-pilot and he finishes and then he is taking his lunch and heading down to the stream by the mill. It is the same stream that goes through the woods but it is wider here and it has fish and crawdads by the banks and some ducks.

Demyx sits carefully on one of the large rocks at the edge of the stream and opens his paper lunch bag and pulls out the sandwiches he had wrapped in yesterday's newspaper. The ducks are drifting closer and he unwraps the first sandwich

and pulls off a piece of bread and tosses it to them. The ducks are scrambling for the piece and Demyx is taking a bite of his sandwich and chewing thoughtfully and wondering why he's having a bit of trouble breathing. He's been feeling slightly feverish and he wonders if it is the worry or something worse because he has also been coughing a lot lately and his throat is scratchy. There is a duck climbing out of the water and onto the bank and coming up to sit next to him and he is hurting and he is coughing and he is putting a hand to his face and is closing his eyes and is wondering if it is the world trying to tell him he is doing something wrong.

Roxas is closing the rubbish bin. He has tossed the garbage out and his chores are done and he is wondering what he is going to do next. Hayner is with his mother in the city and Pence and Olette are helping their parents with the coal and Kairi has gone to visit her cousin and Roxas doesn't have anyone to spend any time with. He brushes his hands on his pants and walks out in front of the apartment building and looks around. The road is empty and he starts wandering down it and he is thinking about going to the store and getting some ice cream when he notices someone is crouched down by the wall of the next building over. He walks over and he is wondering what is wrong and then he realizes it is the pale haired girl whose name he doesn't know. He stops and he fidgets a moment and he thinks she should say something.

"O..," Roxas says and that's not right but she looks up and she smiles shyly and she is holding her notebook in one hand and her pencil in the other.

"Cześć," Her voice is soft and her eyes are big and blue and Roxas hooks his thumbs in his belt loops and tries to look nonchalant.

"Uh, co się gapisz??" He asks and that works better he thinks and the pale haired girl stands up and looks down.

"Te utwory, wyglądają ... dobrze, że wyglądają dziwnie," She says and she brushes a few stray strands of hair behind her ear and looks at him and she is still smiling. "I szkicowałem je w moim notebooku."

"O..," Roxas is taking a few steps forward and he is standing next to her and looking down. The ground has a few strange markings on it and he can't really see what shape they are, but they look almost dog like. The pale haired girl is looking in her notebook and Roxas is looking around and he sees some faint markings going towards the apartments and he is looking the other way and he sees more recent markings heading towards the walls and the roads outside the town.

"Wygląda na to, cokolwiek to było, skierował się do lasu," He says and he looks at the pale haired girl and then they are taking their time walking along the tracks towards the walls at the outside of the town. Roxas is looking down and the pale haired girl is looking through her notebook and Roxas is thinking of something to say and then he notices that suddenly the larger dog-like prints are joined by large hoof prints. They are big but they look a lot like the cloven hoof prints of the farmer's goats and Roxas is a little confused.

"Kozy?" Roxas asks and the pale haired girl crouches down and sketches in her notebook. Roxas waits for her to finish and they head onward towards the road and the tracks are getting clearer. Roxas isn't bad at tracking, he has chased rabbits and foxes in the woods all his life, but he doesn't recognize the large dog-like tracks or what could have made them. They look strange and not entirely dog-like but he isn't sure just what they could be. He is walking onward and the pale haired girl follows and there are clouds in the sky and they pass through a shadow as they walk past the walls and onto the road outside the town. The woods are not far ahead and the tracks are deeper in the ground and much more visible.

"Co sądzisz uczynił je?" The pale haired girl says and she is looking at him and is holding the notebook close to her chest and he crosses his arms and thinks and shrugs.

"Te wyglądają jak odbitek z dużego psa, ale to trochę dziwne, a utwory są zbyt kózkowate dla regularnych kózek." Roxas sighs and looks at her and she looks at him and he doesn't know what else to say. She nods and they start following the tracks again to where they reach the edge of the woods this side of the stream. Roxas stares at the woods and he isn't remembering what his brother told him.

"Zobaczmy, dokąd prowadzą," Roxas says and heads on into the trees and there is no path where he is going just the tracks of the unknown animals. The pale haired girl is not with him and he turns around and he sees her standing at the edge of the path.

"Nie wiem." She says and she is looking warily at the forest beyond him. "Czuje się dziwnie."

"To tylko drzewa." Roxas says, "To tylko lasy."

"Będę ... będę czekać tutaj," The pale haired girl says. She looks frightened and Roxas does not want to force her so he doesn't. He doesn't understand why she is so scared and he turns around and finds the tracks beneath his feet and starts following them again. They wind a bit and in some places the goat tracks overlap the dog tracks as if the goat was following and he is starting to lose his orientation a little. He looks up to find where the sun is but the canopy is thick and he isn't even at the stream yet, and then he is. The tracks head straight for a series of large stones that form a makeshift bridge with the water flowing past between them and he hops over the stream across them and he reaches the other side and the tracks aren't there. He is angry and he looks around but then notices that before him there is an animal path and he walks out onto it and he forgets about the vanished tracks.

There are no tracks on the path but it feels like a deer path or a fox path but he isn't sure. There are low bushes for part of the way on one side and short grass on the other. He is walking along as quietly as he can and he reaches a place on the path with a small clearing on one side and a patch of wild strawberries growing in it. The sun is shining on them and he is tempted to pick some of the ripe red berries but he is intrigued about where the path goes and he passes by instead. The path starts twisting as it goes deeper into the woods and Roxas is walking downhill most of the way. He doesn't know how much time has passed and he doesn't really care and he keeps following the strange path as it moves around elm and oak trees and nothing moves beyond the dark trunks and Roxas is intrigued. The woods are quieter than he remembers them being but he is sure if he focuses hard enough he can hear the chatter of birds somewhere where he can't see them.

The path is winding on and the trees are thinning out and Roxas is continuing, he thinks he can hear the birds clearer and he wants to see if he can find them. He is reaching a slight ridge and hopping down the side and he is able to see a clearing ahead of him where the trees are smaller and not standing too close together. He reaches the edge and the sun is bright and glaring and for a moment he isn't able to see a thing. He blinks and brings up a hand to shield his eyes and he doesn't recognize the place he has ventured into. There is grass growing tall in the clearing but there are trails in it as if someone or something has been walking through it. Across from him and a little to his left is what looks like a cabin. Its roof has holes and there are boarded up windows and the right corner has fallen into itself. Roxas is able to see better as his eyes adjust to the light and he is walking through the tall grass towards the cabin and he stops in the middle of the clearing and he wonders who would build a cabin way out in the woods like this. He isn't sure but he doesn't think he can hear the birds any longer.

There is a slight rustle in the grass behind him and he turns and he sees the red haired man from a few days before standing a few feet behind him.

"Cóż, wyobraź sobie Ciebie tutaj," The red haired man says. He is standing with his hands in the pockets of his dark pants and his rifle on his back and his hat hanging on the rifle's muzzle.

"Kim jesteś?" Roxas asks. He is a little surprised to see the red haired man but he doesn't show it. The man tilts his head slightly and his eyes narrow a bit and he is smiling slightly.

"Czy nie chcielibyście wiedzieć," The red haired man says and he smirks. Roxas is remembering that the pale haired girl is waiting for him and is thinking that he should be getting back and he is thinking he doesn't like the way the man is looking at him. He isn't sure what to say but he speaks anyways.

"Co ty tu robisz??" Roxas says as he takes a step to the side. He realizes that the man is standing directly between him and the path he had taken to reach this place. The cabin is behind him and he doesn't feel good standing there between the red haired man and the dilapidated building.

"Szukam ... mojego psa," The red haired man says. He glances to one side of the clearing.

"Twój pies??" Roxas is unconvinced. The man looks at him and his eyes narrow slightly as he grins widely.

"Mój pies myśliwski," The red haired man says and shifts his stance and pulls his hands out of his pockets and lets them hang at his sides.

"Wydaje się dość lekkomyślne pozwolić psu biegać samą w sobie," Roxas says and takes another step to the side. He is not pretending to be doing something else and he is sure the red haired man knows he is trying to get back to the path he had come from but he doesn't care all too much. The red haired man shifts his pose to keep looking at Roxas as he moves.

"To dobry pies. On jest po prostu dobra zabawa," The red haired man chuckles and his eyes are glittering. Roxas doesn't feel safe anymore and he isn't sure why. He isn't scared but he is nervous and he doesn't want the man to see that even though he feels sure the man knows anyways. He kicks at the ground and keeps moving steadily to put the path at his back

again. The man reaches up and pulls the cap off of the rifle and continues to speak, "To nie jest polowanie sezon, mimo wszystko; nie można uzyskać jeszcze poważne."

Roxas is stopped with the path to his back but the words have chilled him and he is not sure why and what he should make of them. The red haired man pulls the dark knit cap on and his eyes meet Roxas's and Roxas tries to take a step backwards but he doesn't know if he is doing it or not and the sun seems filtered through clouds and the grass and trees look like they are draining of color and then suddenly the red haired man's eyes shift and his grin fades and there is a hand on Roxas's shoulder and suddenly the world is glaring and bright.

There is a hand on his shoulder and it is pulling him back towards the path roughly and the red haired man is left behind in the clearing and his grin is gone and he looks angry and Roxas is suddenly glad that he is no longer there in the clearing.

"Co ci powiedziałem??"

Roxas doesn't recognize his brother's voice. He turns and tries to walk next to him but Demyx pushes him to the front and coughs and coughs and Roxas is worried and tries to look back but Demyx keeps pushing at his back to keep him moving and Roxas does. They are following the path again but it is dark and there are rocks littering the ground and bushes stretching across some places. Roxas doesn't recognize any of the path and he doesn't know if this is where he had come from but he thinks it is, they have reached an area with a clearing to the side and he looks to find the wild strawberries but there is fallen branches and wilted leaves and a pale deer skull set right in the middle.

Roxas hears Demyx cough and he realizes his brother isn't right behind him anymore and he turns around and sees his brother leaning against a rough-barked elm tree. He is coughing hard and Roxas walks back to him and Demyx coughs again and spits something onto the ground and he looks up and Roxas meets his eyes and he knows his brother is angry. He doesn't say anything and they keep walking and there are twigs and rocks and tendrils of creepers all across the path now and Roxas doesn't know where he is going anymore and doesn't know if there is a path beneath his feet at all but Demyx is leading him and he trusts his brother and so he walks.

"Skąd wiedziałeś, że tu jestem??" Roxas asks. Demyx is walking just slightly behind him and glancing back every now and then.

"Dziewczyna," Demyx says and coughs and continues, " Namine, myślę."

Naminé, Roxas thinks that he will remember that.

"Powiedział, że widział jakieś dziwne ślady," Demyx looks at Roxas. They are reaching the stream. "Mówiłem ci, nie tu."

"Zapomniałem," Roxas says. He feels bad; he knows his brother was worried. He thinks of the red haired man and the things he said and the way he looked when they were getting away and he is scared now. He walks over the stones to the other shore and waits for his brother to come across. "Co jest z tym facetem??"

Demyx is not answering him, he is stepping across the stones carefully and he is stopping part of the way across the stream and he is looking back over his shoulder again. Roxas doesn't feel right.

"Trzeba powiedzieć, że ktoś," Roxas says and Demyx looks at him and crosses the rest of the way to the shore and stands next to him. Roxas looks at him and he thinks his brother doesn't look like he is doing too well.

"Powiedziałem funkcjonariusza Xaldin," Demyx says and his voice is low and his eyes look distant. He puts a hand on Roxas's shoulder again and steers him towards where the road is. " Powiedział, że on na nią patrzeć."

"To wszystko?" Roxas asks, climbing up the slight incline. There is no path here at all, they are just walking up among the trees from the stream to the road and Roxas hears Demyx cough every now and then and he doesn't like the sound of it but he doesn't say anything. Demyx keeps his hand on Roxas's shoulder and they keep moving.

"To wszystko." Demyx says and he is looking ahead. "Chodźmy Strona główna."

"W porządku," Roxas says, and they walk.

Demyx isn't sleeping. Roxas is snoring softly on his side of the bed but Demyx can't keep his eyes closed. He is trying not to cough and wake his brother and he rolls onto his side and he closes his eyes and he is facedown in the mud again and he can't move and he is tasting dirt and his eyes snap back open and he is breathing hard. He can't catch his breath and he is trying but he feels the way the air is wheezing in and out of him and he doesn't know if he hears it or just

feels it but he knows there's a crackling and popping in his lungs and he is scared. He has never been sick in his life other than a cold now and then but he thinks he is sick now but he also thinks that he will be fine, just fine. He slips gently out from under the covers and he is trying not to cough again and he walks to the door to their room and opens it quietly. He is slipping out and across the floor to the bathroom and he closes the door behind him and turns on the light. The glare is bright and it is hurting his eyes and he squints and turns the faucet and starts coughing and he can't keep it quiet but he doesn't care just then. He coughs and coughs and there is phlegm gathering in the back of his throat and he spits it out into the sink and he sees that it is speckled with red and his stomach turns and he watches as it is washed away by the water and he leans his forehead against the mirror and feels it cold against his skin and he closes his eyes.

***Chapter 5*: Brightest Before Night Falls**

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A/N:

OH MY GOODNESS.

Please excuse my tardiness. Holidays are crazy around my house, especially Christmas, so I was literally writing a paragraph here and there between decorating and I was falling asleep at the laptop at like 3 in the morning to write. Hahaha. Awesome.

Anyways, onwards to the new chapter. We are now just about... 2 chapters from the end? I'm pretty sure it's 2. We'll see. :D

Enjoy! I demand it!

Thanks to:

Kusegechan – LOVE TO YOU. I hope you enjoy this chapter!

Review! There are prizes to be won, like Love forever! And awesomeness!

Demyx is awake. He has spent the night in the bathtub and the chipped porcelain feels cool on his hot skin and he is almost comfortable. He knows it is time to get ready for work but he doesn't feel like getting up but he knows he has to. He pulls himself up and out of the bathtub and turns on the light and blinks against its harshness and leans against the sink and looks into the mirror. He doesn't like the way he looks, like he hasn't slept at all, and he is having a hard time breathing. He has to go to work, and he turns the faucet and splashes water on his face. He feels hot and he thinks he has a fever but the water is cooling him off a little and he feels better. He still can't breathe too well and he is wheezing but he turns around and opens the door and tries not to cough as he walks as silently as he can over to the bedroom and goes inside.

Roxas is asleep so Demyx moves as quietly as he can and gathers up his clothes and moves back towards the door but his breath catches and he lets out a cough. He hears his brother shift on the bed and he holds his breath even though his throat is burning and his eyes are watering but Roxas doesn't move again and Demyx breathes through his nose and goes out the door and closes it behind him and leans on the wall and coughs into his hands. He feels as if something is stuck in his throat ripping up out of his lungs and he coughs and coughs and he can't stop for a long while. He is worried he's woken someone up but his coughs had been muffled and he doesn't hear either his brother or his mother moving. He gets up and walks to the bathroom and closes the door behind him and turns on the faucet and splashes water on his face again. He feels hotter than he had felt before but his hands are shaking. He sits on the edge of the bathtub and pulls off his t-shirt and changes his boxers and pulls on a clean shirt and clean pants and his socks and he stands up and his head spins. He grabs hold of the edge of the sink and waits for the world to stop and coughs again but not so hard or loud this time. He takes a deep breath but there is a sharp pain in his side and he stops and closes his eyes and waits for it to pass.

He turns around and opens the bathroom door and turns off the light and walks across the darkened room to where the hallway to the door is and turns into it. He can barely see in the dark but he is moving by feel and he leans over and finds his boots and puts them on and laces them up. He stands back up but slowly so his head doesn't spin this time but he leans against the wall anyways because he is trying to catch his breath and his eyes are seeing things hazy and even though it is still mostly dark and it shouldn't bother him it does. He realizes he has forgotten to get his lunch out of the refrigerator and he turns around and heads back towards the kitchen as quietly as he can. He passes his mother's room and he hears a noise inside and he stops but there is silence and he heads on to the kitchen. The curtains in the kitchen aren't pulled closed like the ones in the main room and the faint light of the early morning shines in through them. Demyx walks over to the refrigerator and pulls out the bag with the sandwiches he had made the night before and closes it again. He heads on back to the door and opens it and steps outside into the stairway and closes it behind him and locks it with the keys in his pants pocket. He puts them away and heads down the stairs and on the third step from the bottom he steps on something and it crunches under his boot.

He steps off of it gingerly and leans over and tries to see what it is in the faint light coming from the window in the door below and he sees that he has stepped on the headless body of a small sparrow. He grimaces and thinks that some cat must have left it and nudges it to the side with the toe of his boot and heads on down the staircase. He is taking his time because each time he speeds up he cannot catch his breath but he isn't worried about making it to work too late

because the foreman is an understanding sort of man. He reaches the bottom of the staircase and walks to the outside door and pushes it open and heads outside. There is something in the middle of the road, a dark bundle of some sort. He walks over to it and looks at it and sees that it is a black cat all curled up with the tip of its tail in its mouth and a wire noose pulled tight around its neck. Its tongue is dark and swollen and hanging outside one side of its mouth and its eyes are glassy and wide. Demyx is backing away quickly and he feels his pulse pick up and he is having trouble taking breaths and he starts to cough again and he heads on down the road.

He is reaching the walls and the sun has risen a bit further up but it is beyond the forest and he cannot see it. Its light is shining brighter now and he can see better but his eyes still see everything a bit hazy and he is feeling hotter again. There is a wind picking up and he can hear it blowing through the branches of the trees in the woods and a shudder runs down his back and he is trying to ignore it and trying to focus on putting one foot in front of the other. A bead of sweat runs down the side of his face. He is feeling stuffy and there is a pressure in his head that comes and goes and comes and goes. He is reaching the spot where the path breaks off from the road and leads to the woods and there is something in the middle of the road again. He wants to stop but his feet aren't listening and he is approaching it and it is reddish brown and he is closer now and it is the head of a fox sitting on the road as if it were buried up to its neck and it is looking straight at him. He swallows thickly and his head pulses again and a few feet farther is the body of the fox and its paws are tied together and its tail is stretched out behind it.

His feet stumble for a moment and he hears something on the path ahead of him and he looks and he sees a white lamb farther ahead of him where the road begins to turn and he sees that is walking away from him. He starts walking towards it and he is walking faster and faster and the lamb is walking slowly but steadily as if following someone and he wants to call out to it but his breath catches in his throat. He is coughing and the lamb is taking the turn and he is going faster and faster and he reaches the turn and he takes the turn and the lamb is in front of him and it is curled up and its head is on its legs and its coat is shining in the sunlight and its blood is pooling on the ground beneath it and staining its white coat crimson and Demyx is turning and he is running and he cannot see anymore.

Roxas is sitting on a chair next to the bed. His brother is pushing at the covers they'd pulled up around his shoulders and muttering feverishly and his mother is gone to work for half the day and he is sitting waiting for the doctor to come down from the city and tell him what is wrong with his brother. He has never seen his brother sick before but he sees him now and he is scared. He remembers what has been happening and he wishes he had listened to his brother and not gone into the woods the day before and he wishes his brother isn't sick. The clock in the main room is ticking softly and Roxas is counting the seconds and the minutes and he is wondering why the doctor isn't there yet. He knows he has to come down from the city but he doesn't think that it should be taking this long.

It is nine thirty in the morning and it is exactly two hours and thirty five minutes since Demyx came stumbling back home and Roxas can see that he isn't getting any better. He is waiting and trying not to get too anxious and then the doorbell rang and he is up and is racing to the door. He opens it and the doctor is standing just outside and he is looking haggard and he comes in with his large black bag and he is taking his coat off and handing it to Roxas and brushing his pale hair out of his face and fixing his glasses.

"Przepraszam za spóźnienie," Doctor Vexen says and he is heading further inside the house, "ale wpadłem na straszną scenę po drodze."

"Co się stało??" Roxas is hanging the coat on the coat rack and is turning to look at the doctor.

"Nie powinienem ... Ale ... The doctor waves his hand dismissively and sets his bag on the table. "Och, dowiecie się już wkrótce ... Po drodze do miasta, tam, gdzie biegnie wzdłuż niewielkiego występu, że jest zanurzona w dół do strumienia ..."

The doctor pauses and looks at his hands and then opens his bag and begins pulling out various objects. Roxas walks up to him and watches him pull out a stethoscope and a pack of tongue depressors and a small dark box in which something rattles as the doctor places it to the side.

"Znalazłam funkcjonariusza Xaldin na skraju drogi, był w strasznym stanie" Doctor Vexen shakes his head and looks over the objects and closes the bag. "Wyglądało na to, że mógł zostać zaatakowany przez jakiegoś zwierzęcia, ale co? Nie wiem. Zrobiłem, co mogłem, aby pomóc i zadzwonił ze sklepu do ambulansu. Nie mogłam zostawić go w spokoju, więc musiałem czekać, aż karetka przybyła na przyjęcie z powrotem do miasta."

Roxas feels the blood drain from his face. He is remembering the day before and how his brother said that Officer Xaldin would look into things and he is worried that the red haired man has something to do with it. The red haired man has a hunting dog, and he wonders what kind of prey the dog is trained to hunt. He thinks about Hayner's panther and thinks that there is a much worse monster in the woods.

"Czy on będzie wszystko w porządku?" Roxas is showing the doctor the way to the bedroom and leading him inside and Demyx is still muttering through his fever and he has managed to toss the covers to one side and his eyes are wide and glazed. Doctor Vexen gives Roxas a look and the boy thinks that their town is going to be promoting a new officer very soon.

Doctor Vexen puts on his stethoscope and places the metal chestpiece over Demyx's heart and then he moves it over his left lung and then over his right and Roxas watches him closely but he doesn't see the doctor's expression change. Doctor Vexen takes the stethoscope off and leans over and looks into Demyx's eyes and then he opens his mouth and presses his tongue down with a depressor and shines a small flashlight into his throat and then he covers Demyx up again with the covers and he puts everything aside and holds the small dark box on his knees and looks at Demyx for a long moment.

"Co jest nie tak?" Roxas hears his voice waver but he doesn't care. He is clutching the edge of his shirt tightly in his hands and he wants the doctor to say something.

"Ma zapalenie płuc," Doctor Vexen says, and he opens the small dark box and he looks through the items inside.

"Zapalenie płuc??" Roxas is surprised and confused and he looks at his brother and he doesn't understand. "Ale to lato."

"Istnieją różne rodzaje zapalenia płuc," Doctor Vexen says. He pulls two small bottles out of the box and they rattle with pills and he places them on the bedside table. "Upewnij się, że on ma jedną z pigułek z tej butelki z niebieskim etykiecie każdego ranka. Z butelki z czerwoną etykietą jest on przyjąć jedną rano i jedną wieczorem. Czuję, że to może być bakteryjne zapalenie płuc ..."

Roxas hears that unspoken "ale" at the end of the doctor's words and he is not feeling good about it. Doctor Vexen places a hand on Demyx's forehead and the blonde in the bed shifts and closes his eyes and the doctor is looking at him curiously. Roxas turns to the small bottles and tries to read the names of the medications but his eyes aren't working too well.

"Ci, powinno pomóc," Doctor Vexen is standing up and he is looking at Roxas. "Najważniejszą rzeczą jest to, że opiera. On jest młody i powinien on być w stanie walczyć to dość szybko, choć wydaje się, że nie źle znosił. Jednak, pozwól mi zobaczyć ... dziś jest środa. Będę dzwonić w piątek, by sprawdzić się na nim; jeśli nie poprawi, to mogę wziąć go do szpitala, aby upewnić się, że odzyskana całkowicie."

Roxas says nothing but nods his head and the doctor places a hand on his shoulder and then he walks out of the room and to the large table and Roxas fixes the covers around his brother's shoulders because he doesn't know what else to do and walks out as well. The doctor is putting everything away into the big black bag and Roxas stands next to him and he is thinking about the hospital and about his brother and he is still wringing the edges of his shirt in his hands.

"Nie martw się, jestem pewien, że wszystko wyjdzie w końcu w prawo," Doctor Vexen says. He smiles and Roxas nods and then lets the doctor out. He walks back to the bedroom and looks at the bottles again but he still cannot read them and he looks at his brother and Demyx is asleep but he is wheezing and his breath catches on almost every inhale and Roxas sits and waits for his mother to come home.

"Słyszałeś o Officer Xaldin?" Hayner asks. He is walking backwards along the main road in front of Roxas and Pence and he looks excited.

"Tak, to jest dość dziwne, co się dzieje ostatnio," Pence says and looks pensive. He takes a bite from the cheese bun he is holding and looks up at the sky.

Roxas says nothing but he is thinking about it anyway. He is outside because his mother said it isn't good for him to sit inside all day but he feels restless. He is holding a can of cola that is turning warm and he hasn't even drunk half of it yet. Hayner looks to the side and bites his lip and Roxas knows he is thinking of doing something and Roxas doesn't think he wants to be part of it right now.

"Hej!" Hayner grins and puts his hands behind his head. "Dlaczego nie możemy tam iść i to sprawdzić!"

"Nad gdzie?" Pence asks. Roxas tips the can he is holding and lets it spill out as they walk.

"Do miejsca, gdzie znaleźli funkcjonariusza Xaldin," Hayner's eyes shine. "Może uda nam się znaleźć coś tam."

"Jak co?" Pence asks again. It is a conversation that is rapidly discluding Roxas but he knows he is still involved because Hayner looks at him when he speaks next.

"Jak kto to zrobił, czy co..." Hayner's voice drops off ominously. Roxas spills out the last of the cola and crushes the can and thinks about what to do with it.

"To nie jest pantera, Hayner," He says and he sounds irritable even to himself. Hayner makes a face and huffs and Pence is finishing the last of his cheese bun and they are taking the corner past the walls and onto the road by the woods and they run into Kairi.

"Och! I zbliża się do was dostać!" Kairi looks excited. "Nie uwierzysz, co właśnie zobaczył!"

"Niekótre tajemnicze stworzenie?" Hayner asks, dropping his arms and turning to look at her. Roxas is only half-listening.

"Nie, obojętne. słuchać." Kairi's voice drops to conspiratorial whisper. "Szedłem przez oficera gdzie znaleźć Xaldin -"

"To gdzie się dzieje!" Hayner cuts in. Kairi gives him an annoyed look and keeps talking.

"Szedłem przez, i zatrzymał się na skraju lasu. Myślałem, że coś słyszałem, więc wyglądał obok drzewa i zobaczyłem kogoś," Kairi puts her hands to her thighs. "Po prostu pełzanie z drzewa na drzewo, jak starał się być naprawdę cicho. Ledwo mogłem go widzieć, mimo że wyglądał, jakby był bardzo blisko."

Roxas is shaken by what she is saying. Pence and Hayner are excited and are talking but Roxas is clutching the empty cola can.

"Jak on wygląda?" Roxas asks. He doesn't think his voice shakes but he might be wrong because Kairi gives him a strange look.

"Nie jestem też pewien, ubrany był cały ciemny, i mogę tylko naprawdę zobaczyć jego włosy ..." Kairi frowns. "Wyglądało na to, że był ... blada, bardzo blady kolor niebiesko-owski."

"Och, daj spokój, to nie jest możliwe," Hayner says, and crosses his arms. Kairi looks at him crossly.

"Widziałem go, ja tylko mówię, co widziałam," Kairi says.

"Cóż, nie można zobaczyć, gdzie poszedł?" Hayner asks, and taps his foot.

"Zniknął między drzewami, a potem przyszedł do was, aby znaleźć ci powiedzieć," Kairi explains. Roxas hears a noise behind them and turns and sees that it is Naminé and she is walking up to them slowly. Kairi is still talking and Pence and Hayner are paying attention but Roxas isn't.

"Dobrze, chodźmy następnie!" Hayner says and Roxas looks back at them.

"Muszę iść do domu," Roxas says. Hayner looks surprised and Pence and Kairi do as well but Roxas gives an apologetic smile and starts to turn around.

"Daj spokój," Hayner says, but he sees that there is no convincing Roxas and lets him go. Roxas turns away and hears the others walk off and he is wondering about the strange man that Kairi has seen in the woods. He has never seen a person matching that description before but he is worried that the man has a connection to the red haired man and to what happened to Officer Xaldin.

"Cześć," Roxas says as he nears Naminé. The pale haired girl had slowed as she neared him and she is standing and waiting for him as he walks up to her.

"Cześć," Naminé says and smiles shyly but her eyes look anxious. "Słyszałem, co mówił o Kairi."

"Pewnie widząc rzeczy," Roxas dismisses. He doesn't want to think about strange men.

"Nie, ja ... ja też go widział," Naminé says and she fiddles with her bag and Roxas is surprised.

"W lesie?" Roxas asks even though he doesn't want to know but maybe he does. Naminé shakes her head.

"Szedłem przez wejścia do bunkrów, a jeden otworzył szeroko drzwi." Naminé looks at him with worried eyes. "Mężczyzna został tylko wewnątrz bunkra, ledwo mogłem go zobaczyć."

"Może jest ... włóczęga, czy coś," Roxas is trying to think of ways to not fit the two men together.

"Nie wiem," Naminé shrugs, "Ale to było dziwne. On ... on się odwrócił ..."

Naminé pauses, and Roxas steps closer.

"Odwrócił się, i to jak jego oczy świeciły" Naminé shudders and she looks somewhere else and Roxas can't meet her eyes and then she looks back at him. "Nie wiem, może to było światło czy coś."

Roxas is trying not to look shocked but he is and he looks down and he notices something.

"Gdzie jest twój notebook?" Roxas asks and Naminé looks down at her hands and looks back up at him.

"Kiedy mężczyzna spojrzał na mnie, ja właśnie ... naprawdę przerażony. Nie wiem dlaczego ... myślę, że spadła mi notebooka jak szykowałem się," Naminé says and she looks nervous but then she smiles. "To wszystko prawda, mam nowy."

"Możemy go dostać, jeśli chcesz," Roxas says. Then he remembers his brother and remembers that his mother has things to do and he continues. "To znaczy, ja nie wiem, czy mogę iść dzisiaj, ale może jutro?"

"Chcesz iść ze mną?" Naminé asks. She looks a little surprised and that makes Roxas feel a little happy and he manages to grin.

"Tak," He says and Naminé smiles.

"Och, chciałem zapytać," Naminé starts, "Czy Demyx porządku?"

Roxas is a little surprised by her question and doesn't know what to reply and he knows the town is small but he hasn't told anyone and he didn't think news could travel that fast.

"Wychodzę na skraj lasu, gdzie strumień zwany Narewki Rzeka biegnie blisko drogi rano szkicować, a ja zwykle się z nim, kiedy jest w drodze do pracy," Naminé explains.

"Jest chory," Roxas says. He doesn't say more and he doesn't want to and Naminé doesn't ask about it but she looks worried.

"Mam nadzieję, że lepiej czuje się wkrótce," Naminé says and she looks a little sad but Roxas is feeling good because Hayner and Pence didn't ask about Demyx and they never ask about Demyx but Naminé did and he knows that she asked because she is actually worried and not just because she should and he wants to tell Demyx so that he can feel good about it too.

"Wracasz do domu?" Naminé asks and Roxas nods and she fiddles with her bag and Roxas looks to the side.

"Gdzie idziesz?" Roxas asks and Naminé looks at him and she smiles softly.

"Myślę, że mam zamiar iść do domu zbyt," Naminé says and Roxas grins.

"Daj spokój, ja z tobą chodzić," Roxas says and Naminé nods and they start walking back to the houses together and Roxas is feeling warm inside and Naminé is smiling and they are talking and Roxas doesn't really care what they're talking about because everything looks bright.

Chapter 6: Zaćmienie

Disclaimer: Kingdom Hearts and characters copyright Square Enix and such people. Not me.

A/N:

SO LIKE

There was time, so I wrote stuff. That's a good thing, right?

I find it interesting that the more intense and near-to-the-end the story gets, the more run-ons I tend to use. I think I'm trying to recreate the whole play-by-play aspect movies have, in written form. I don't know how well it works, but I hope someone can tell me. xD

Yes, I am ninety-percent sure the next chapter is the Last Chapter. DUN DUN DUN. I'm excited. Are you? :D

Thanks to:

Kusegechan

Review! PLEASE? I'm not past begging at this stage.

It is early morning and it is early enough for the room to still be dark. Demyx is staring at the ceiling and trying to breathe and trying not to cough so he doesn't wake anyone up. He is trembling and it is only partly because he is sick because his fever is falling after the medicine. He is trembling and it is mostly because of what is outside his window. He can hear it shuffling on the ground outside and it is growling low and it is scratching its claws on the house walls he knows it is. He shudders and clutches the covers in sweaty hands and pulls the covers up closer to his chin and he looks at the window and there are flickering shadows behind the curtains and he looks away again. Something taps against the house wall something somewhere makes a floorboard in the next room squeak and Demyx stares hard at the ceiling and his breath wheezes and he whimpers. His chest is burning and his lungs aren't working right and he feels sweaty and dirty and there is something sitting deep in the pit of his stomach eating way at him just gnawing on his insides and he can't ignore it.

There is a howl, suddenly, except it isn't a howl but more like a wail and it isn't even that because it doesn't fade but changes to a chopped guttural chuckle and it raises in pitch and it is piercing through his ears and he doesn't know if it is outside or just in his head and he is shaking and clutching his hands to his ears. He looks to the window and sees that the sky is slightly brighter but the staccato laughing wail is echoing in his head. He closes his eyes and he sees red among black and there is a pair of eyes glowing just past the edges of the darkness behind his eyelids and his eyes snap open again. He curls his fingers against his ears and hums to himself but his tune is off and it is hard to breathe while humming but he doesn't stop and he feels the crackling in his lungs and he coughs and he hums and he coughs some more. The sky outside the window is brightening slowly but he is still hearing the shuffling outside even with his hands over his ears but it is starting to fade and he hopes it is gone he hopes it doesn't come back but he knows it will as soon as darkness falls again. He had watched the moon move past the window during the night and he had seen it hang bloated against the night sky and he had felt the chill deep inside him and he wants the morning light to burn away the darkness soon he doesn't want to see the moon anymore.

It is brighter outside the window and he hears someone moving around beyond the bedroom door and then there are footsteps moving closer and he knows he shouldn't be afraid but he is but then the door opens and it is his mother. She looks in and she sees he is awake and she smiles and walks over to the bed.

"Cześć kochanie, jak się czujesz?" She asks and she places a hand on his forehead and Demyx manages a small smile.

"Lepiej," He says but he coughs even though he doesn't want to but his mother looks a little less worried than she had the night before and he thinks he really is better if she is looking at him like that.

"To dobrze, że medycyna lekarz dał musi działać," His mother says and she sits on the chair and Demyx looks at the window and the sky is no longer dark and he can't hear it out there anymore and the echoes are gone from his head.

"Mam zamiar przygotować się do pracy, chcesz coś od kuchni?" His mother asks.

"Woda," Demyx says. His breath is still catching in his throat but he doesn't feel so tired but his head still has that

pressure sensation that comes and goes. His mother nods and pats him on the arm and gets up and walks to the door and leaves the room and he hears her moving to the kitchen.

He lays there for a little while and he is glad the day has come and his eyes are beginning to close and then something taps at his window and he looks but there is nothing there but he hears the shuffling and the snuffling and he hears the claws on the walls but they sound like they are inside and they sound like they are just above his head and his breath catches and his hands clutch at the covers and his heart is pounding and he can't see anything but he hears it all the same.

"Demyx?"

He hears his brother's voice and he looks to the doorway and starts to push himself up to sit and he is wheezing he hadn't thought he was breathing this hard. Roxas rushes in and puts his hands on his shoulders and pushes him back down on the bed but the growling and the snuffling is growing in his ears and he can't see what is making it but he knows what it is and his lungs are starting to burn and his stomach is twisting.

"Hej, położył się z powrotem w dół," Roxas says and tries to push him back onto the mattress.

Demyx shakes his head and clutches at his brother's arms and he was feeling better but everything is burning inside of him now and he needs to say something because he can see the shadows behind his brother and there are eyes glowing in those shadows and they're getting closer.

"Roxas," Demyx breathes and he is wheezing and his brother stops trying to force him down on the bed and looks at him.

"Tak?" Roxas says and he is holding him by the shoulders and Demyx swallows hard but his mouth is dry.

"Roxas, słuchaj ... Słuchaj, nie Roxas ..." Demyx is having a hard time forming words because the growling is growing in his head and it is chasing all the words out of his brain. "Nie idź na zewnątrz dzisiaj. nie rób."

"Demyx, co ty -" Roxas is confused but Demyx grips his arms tighter and interrupts him.

"Nie rób." Demyx grits his teeth and he looks into his brother's eyes. "Nie idź na zewnątrz."

The growl is turning into a rumble and the rumble is turning into a wail. Demyx doesn't hear if Roxas responds because he is dropping back onto the bed and he is breathing hard and his heart is pounding in his ears but it isn't enough to block out the feral cackle and laughter that is invading his mind.

Roxas is sitting at the kitchen window with his arms crossed on the sill and his chin on his arms. He can see the back yards from the window and he can see the old lady from the building over working in her garden. He is wondering about his brother's words and wondering just what he is supposed to do with himself. The sun is shining and there are birds singing somewhere and the window is open and he can feel the warm breeze and he wants out badly but the last time he did something his brother told him not to do he ended up in a place he didn't want to be in and he doesn't want that to happen again.

He gets up and walks through the kitchen to the main room and across it to the bedroom where Demyx is still in bed and he looks inside and sees his brother is sleeping. Demyx had been getting better but he has been hit by a fever again and this time the medicine doesn't seem to be helping the older boy and Roxas is worried. He leans against the doorframe and watches his brother take a wheezing breath in his sleep and let it out and take in another wheezing breath and Roxas can hear the slight whistle on his exhales and he knows that isn't a good sign. Today is Thursday and tomorrow is Friday and Roxas is scared that his brother won't get better and that the doctor would be coming to get him tomorrow to take him to the city hospital and hook him up to some machines and put needles in him like they did to Hayner's cousin after he fell in the holding pond and got sick and didn't wake up for four days.

He is standing and thinking and there is a knock on the door and he is surprised and he closes the door to the bedroom and walks over to the front door and opens it and he sees that it is Naminé. She has her pale hair pulled back in a ponytail and her eyes are bright and her bag is at her side and she smiles at him and Roxas feels his heart flutter and he grins back.

"Cześć," Naminé says and she fidgets with her bag's strap a little.

"Hej," Roxas says and he is still grinning at her and he remembers now that he is supposed to help her find her notebook and he is forgetting what his brother said again. " Czy jesteś gotowy, aby przejść wygląd?"

"Tak, mam na myśli, jeśli potrafisz," Naminé says shyly and Roxas smiles.

"Chwileczkę, muszę się dostać na moje buty," Roxas says and he lets Naminé step inside the door and he pulls his boots on.

"Jak to Demyx?" Naminé asks and Roxas is sitting on the floor now because his left boot is being stubborn.

"Jest lepszy," Roxas says, and he pauses and listens but he doesn't hear anything coming from the bedroom and he ties up his boots and stands up. "Śpi teraz."

"Czy mamy czekać, aż mama wróci do domu?" Naminé asks and she looks worried but Roxas grins at her.

"Mama będzie wkrótce w domu, a on uzyskać więcej odpoczynku, nie depcząc wokół mnie tak," Roxas says and he and Naminé head out the door. Naminé looks a little uncertain but she gives him a grin and the two head down the stairs and out the door. They take their time as they walk down the road to the walls. They don't speak much but they don't really need to and Roxas feels calm and comfortable and warm. They reach the walls and take the corner and head on down towards where the tree branches meet overhead and Roxas is becoming more aware of their surroundings because they are nearing the bunker.

The path to the bunker is clear and when Roxas looks ahead he sees that one of the doors is pushed open and there is darkness beyond it. He stops and looks and Naminé stops next to him and he looks at her and he sees that she is nervous and he holds out his hand to her and he gives her a reassuring grin and she looks a little surprised but she takes his hand and they head closer to the bunker doors.

"To ... To powinno być gdzieś tutaj ..." Naminé says and she looks around and Roxas looks around but he doesn't see anything lying on the path.

"Może bliżej drzwi?" Roxas asks, and he heads on closer and Naminé's hand is still in his and she is hesitating slightly and then she is walking with him closer to the open door. Roxas is looking at the path they are on and then he hears something and he looks up and something passes just beyond the door and he stops and Naminé stops next to him.

"Widziałeś to?" Roxas asks and Naminé looks at him but he doesn't notice and he moves forward again but he doesn't get far because Naminé hasn't moved and she is still holding his hand and her grip is tight. He turns and he looks at her and she is looking scared. "Co jest nie tak?"

"Nie sądzę, że powinniśmy tam iść," Naminé says and she is still holding his hand but Roxas smiles at her and pulls her hand gently.

"Chodź, musimy po prostu krok w szybką i przyjdź z powrotem," Roxas says but Naminé doesn't look convinced and he sighs. "No dobrze, pójdę rzucić okiem, a ja zaraz wrócę, dobrze?"

"Czekać." Naminé squeezes his hand and takes a deep breath. "Nie, pójdę z tobą."

"W porządku," Roxas says and they walk forward towards the doors and they step past them and it is dark inside except for where the sun is shining through the open door. Roxas moves forward and Naminé is right beside him and then he notices that the doorway he'd walked through the first time he'd come inside is outlined with light and he heads towards it and their steps echo in the silence around them. They walk along the rails beneath their feet and to the door and the door is slightly opened and Roxas pushes it open and they step beyond. The desk he'd walked by before is still standing and the lamp that hadn't worked before is on but Roxas can't see where it is plugged in and he isn't even sure if it has a cord at all. Naminé stops next to him but he pulls at her hand and pulls her along as he walks towards the desk. He smells cigarette smoke and there is a noise somewhere ahead and he stops by the desk and he sees that the cord from the lamp had been cut off right by the base but the lamp is glowing anyways and he feels a chill and he notices that Naminé's hand isn't in his hand anymore and he looks around and she is gone.

He spins to look towards the doorway but it is empty and he turns again but the corridor is empty as well and from what he can see it looks as if all the doors are closed. The noise comes again from somewhere ahead of him, a sound like something dragging across the ground and he wants to call out for Naminé but he can't get his breath out right and he is walking forward past the desk and past closed doors and the light is behind him and his shadow stretches long and thin ahead of him and he looks down and he sees that there are other shadows as well just as long and thin as his and they are all around him and he turns around but there is no one there and he grits his teeth and turns back towards where the sound is coming from and he walks with a purpose now.

He passes the doors and he gets to the place where the other corridor branches off. He takes a step out of the main

corridor and into the branching hallway and he steps on something and it crinkles underfoot and he leans over and picks it up and it is a notebook and he turns a little so that the lamp light shines on it and he sees that it is open to a page with a starling sketched on it and there is the mark of his boot over the bird's body and the edges of the page are scratched up and he knows now that this is the way he is supposed to be going. He holds the notebook in his hand and he walks further into the corridor and it is rapidly growing dark around him and he feels the ground lower beneath his feet and the corridor begins to curve and it should be pitch black but it isn't there seems to be a glow all around him. He puts a hand out to the right wall and keeps walking and he is hearing something clear now a breathing or a growling he can't be sure but it is getting more distinct as he walks. The area ahead of him is beginning to get a little brighter and the corridor is straightening out and it is level now and he takes his hand off of the wall and walks forward and he sees that ahead of him is a doorway and the door is open and a flickering light is shining through it.

He walks to the doorway and steps past it and he looks and sees he is inside a cabin but one side has collapsed and the windows are boarded up and the door is nailed shut and covered in boards and it looks familiar but all wrong. There is a lantern standing on a beaten and nearly broken cupboard and a three legged table is leaning against the far wall under a boarded window and he turns and first he sees Naminé laying on the ground and her eyes are closed and then he sees the man standing above her with his back to him and he is dressed in what looks like a dark army uniform and his hair is a strange blue color and Roxas is angry.

"Co zrobiłeś z nią stało?" Roxas asks and he clutches the notebook tightly in his hand and makes his other hand into a fist and he glares at the man and the man turns and he looks at him and he has an x-shaped scar over the bridge of his nose and his eyes look strange and they seem to glow in the flickering light of the lantern and Roxas feels a chill run down his spine but he grits his teeth and stands his ground.

The man doesn't answer but he grins and it is feral and Roxas sees the tips of his canine teeth and they seem sharper than they should be and Roxas takes a step back without even realizing it. He isn't scared but he is all the same and he doesn't want to be so he tells himself he isn't. The strange man with the glowing eyes and the feral grin takes a step towards him and Roxas takes a step back and then there is a growl and Roxas doesn't know where it comes from but the man is upon him and he is grabbing at his shoulders and he is throwing him to the floor and Roxas is twisting away as the man tries to grab him again and Roxas is pushing himself to his feet and he has lost the notebook in the scuffle and he is trying to punch the man but the man catches his fist and pushes him back and Roxas falls against the cupboard and the lantern wobbles and it falls to the floor and there is a pungent smell of kerosene and Roxas has his hands on the man's shoulders and the man has his hands on Roxas's throat and Roxas is trying to push and kick but he is finding it hard to breathe and hard to think and the man's eyes seem wilder and the scar on his face seems to be growing ragged and his teeth seem longer and Roxas thinks he is seeing things because he isn't sure he is seeing a man at all anymore but something like a beast like a half-man with animal parts in him and then he isn't seeing much at all except bright dots of white and dark black dancing in front of his eyes and his lungs are burning and his hands are weakening and then there is a smash and a crunch and a thud and Roxas is on the floor and breathing hard and his eyes still can't see too well but they are starting to see better.

Roxas looks to the side and sees the man is crumpled on the floor and he sees the man had hit the table as he fell and he looks up and he sees Naminé standing above him and she is holding a board in her hands and she is breathing hard and she is looking terrified and Roxas pushes himself up and manages to stand and there is something wrong, something more wrong than a man who seems to be an animal.

"Musimy się stąd wydostać," Naminé says and she drops the board and she grabs his hand and Roxas smells smoke and he looks down and sees that kerosene has flown out of the lantern and it is lit and the floor is burning and more kerosene is pouring out and he clutches Naminé's hand and they turn to the door way and the doorway is occupied.

"Zostawiam na pięć minut," The red haired man says and he grins but it is cold and his eyes are like daggers and his rifle is in his hand but it is pointing at the ground and Roxas shudders and pulls Naminé closer to him and he feels the heat from the flames behind him. The red haired man takes a step inside the cabin and he looks towards the strange man with the glowing eyes but he isn't moving and then the red haired man looks at Roxas and at Naminé. "Wygląda na to dwa czy sporo na nim."

" Czy to twój 'pies myśliwski'?" Roxas asks and the red haired man chuckles.

"Oooh, szybkie ucznia, prawda?" He says and he raises the rifle slightly so that the muzzle is pointing somewhere around the height of Roxas's knees.

"Jesteś ci za wszystkich ataków, prawda?" Roxas says and he is breathing hard and his throat hurts where the strange man had grabbed him and he feels Naminé's hand tremble in his own.

The red haired man doesn't reply but his eyes narrow slightly and his grin turns just a little amused but his gaze is still

as sharp as a stiletto and Roxas doesn't just feel a chill down his spine he feels cold all over and the flames are rising behind him and there is sweat on his forehead and he feels like he is in hell with the devil in front of him.

"Byłaś hounding mój brat też, prawda?" Roxas is angry and he remembers what his brother had told him that morning and he wishes he had remembered earlier and he had listened but he hadn't and now here he is.

"Och-ho-ho, twój brat, tak," The red haired man lowers the rifle a little and shifts his weight to his other foot and looks amused. "Jak on to robi, tak przy okazji? Nie widziałem go ostatnio."

Roxas doesn't know what to make of the strange glint in the red haired man's eyes or the way his grin stretches into a smirk and he thinks there is something he doesn't know and he is not sure he wants to but he does know that he doesn't like it. He thinks of his brother still sick and feverish at home and he thinks how horrible he has been to have left him like that and gone out without at least waiting for his mother to get home and he is angry.

"Opuszczali," Roxas says and he clutches Naminé's hand. The red haired man's eyes narrow and he raises the rifle and Roxas pushes Naminé forward and to the side and the red haired man fires and Roxas doesn't know how he does it but he has dodged to the side and he sees Naminé is near the door and the red haired man has the rifle pointing at him and Naminé is on her feet and looking at Roxas and Roxas drops to the floor and rolls and the heat is still behind him and the flickering light is everywhere and dust rises from the bullet holes that crack into the floorboards next to him. He puts his feet beneath him and he pushes against the floor and leaps forward and he sees that Naminé has gotten hold of another board and the red haired man has backed up and is aiming at him but looking at Naminé and Roxas is suddenly there and he suddenly has metal in his hands and the red haired man looks surprised when the butt of the gun cracks into his breastbone and he falls to the floor. Naminé says something but Roxas pushes her towards the door and then he turns and the red haired man is on his feet again and he is framed with flames and a large hunting knife is in his hands and it is glinting red and Roxas raises the rifle and the man grins and Roxas pulls the trigger and there is a shot and a shot and a shot and someone screams and it is Naminé and Roxas doesn't stop until he sees the red haired man is on the floor. The flames are eating up the wall of the cabin and the strange man with glowing eyes is hidden behind a curtain of fire and the red haired man is surrounded by drops of crimson and he is laughing and the drops of crimson are turning into pools and the red haired man looks at Roxas and his eyes are gleaming dangerously in the fire's light and the hunting knife is still in his hand and he doesn't look like he is in pain at all he is laughing and he looks relaxed and he looks amused.

"Nie myśl, że to koniec, chłopiec," The red haired man says and the roof creaks and Roxas drops the rifle and turns and grabs Naminé's hand and pulls her into the corridor and drags her away and ignores her crying and hears the creak of fire weakened timbers behind them.

They follow the curve and they slip on moss and Naminé is not crying so much anymore and Roxas is beginning to breathe a little easier and there is a crack and a rumble and it echoes around them in the corridor and Roxas ignores it and they are at the meeting of the hallways and they are in the main hallway and they are passing the desk and the lamp is out and the doorway ahead is open and they are out through it and it is strangely dark and the rails beneath their feet guide them to the bunker doors and they step outside and Naminé clutches at Roxas arms and he feels her tremble.

He feels her tremble and he looks up and the sun had been just past it's midpoint in the sky when they had entered the bunker but now he sees that night has fallen and everything is dark and the moon hangs bloated and glowing in the sky above them and he forgets to breathe and then he remembers again and they run down the road and past the walls and past the houses until they get home and Roxas feels eyes on his back all the way.

Chapter 7: With Stolen Wings

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A/N:

Last Chapter! OMG LAST CHAPTER

A little shorter than before, because that's how it wanted to be.

My goodness, I can't believe that Hiena is done already. It was such a wild ride, totally different from what I usually do. I hope that those of you who have read it enjoyed it, or found it intriguing. There's a lot of things I tried to do with this and I think I managed to do something interesting here.

Yes, there are things that weren't answered exactly. Hey, sometimes these stories write themselves. That's the way it goes.

Thank you for the good times.

Review! DO IT. THE COFFEE COMMANDS YOU TO.

It is dark outside and the moon has moved across the sky but Roxas finds it impossible to sleep. His mother had stayed up late waiting for him and she had been worried and he'd been scolded worse than he'd been scolded in a long time but she is sleeping now and he is sitting on the couch in the main room and looking out the window and trying to connect the stars. His mother had said that Demyx was doing better but he had been asleep when Roxas came back and the younger boy hadn't wanted to bother him.

Roxas finds a pattern in the stars but he loses it and he tries to find it again and he is trying hard not to let his eyes slide close even though they want to badly. He wants to sleep but each time he tries he sees flames and he feels heat and there is something all around him and there is something in his hands and he opens his eyes again because he thinks he knows what would come next if he didn't and he doesn't want to see that. He is worried about Naminé and wonders if her parents are mad as well but he isn't able to do anything about it anyways. He sighs and pulls his knees to his chest and watches the stars flicker, and flicker, and his eyes are sliding closed and there is a low rumble outside his window. It is a rumble and something of a growl and he frowns and keeps his eyes from closing and the growl is getting louder. He lets go of his knees and he slips to the edge of the couch and comes closer to the window and looks outside.

There is nothing he can see that wasn't there before but there are shadows everywhere and the darkness in the doorway in the next door building looks strange. He squints and tries to see better and he hears the growl again, loud and rumbling and he can feel it in his head. He puts his hands to the window and presses his face to the glass and peers outside and he doesn't feel so sleepy anymore. There is a flicker somewhere past the corner of the building next door, a flare of bright orange that vanishes quickly. Roxas turns his face against the glass and tries to make out what the flicker was and then the growl grows louder and rumbles and it starts turning into a cackle and the flicker comes again only this time it is larger and it doesn't flicker it reaches out and it licks along the edge of the wooden fence separating gardens and dashes along the wooden crossbeams and spreads across the supports and jumps into the gardens themselves and Roxas's breath is caught in his throat. He pushes away from the window and dashes to the door and pulls it open and runs out and down the stairs in his t-shirt and shorts and socks and runs to the main doors and pulls them open and runs outside and around the corner of the house and to where the wooden fence is and he reaches the gardens and the fence is fine and the flames are gone.

He leans over and braces his hands on his knees and breathes and breathes and his heart is pounding and he doesn't know what just happened. There were flames but he can make out the fence in the light from the moon and the tomato plants growing next to it and they are untouched and everything is quiet around him. He stands up straight and looks around but he cannot see anything out of the ordinary and he is turning around when he hears the growl again. It comes from behind him and a little to the left and he turns around but there is nothing there but the growl is coming from behind him again now. It is growing louder and he hears something scratch along the ground and drag against it and he can smell smoke but he can't see any flames. The growl is all around him and he turns and turns but there is nothing but the cackling growling rumble around him and in his ears and in his head. He is cold and he is shaking and he is stumbling back towards the house and the ground under his feet is torn up and scratched up and the growl is loud and he looks up and there is a flickering in the windows of their apartment and he is dashing to the front of the house again and in through the doors. He rushes up the stairs and in through their door again. There is a flickering in the main room but it fades as he runs into it and he is breathing hard and he spins around and he looks and there is a flickering around the door to the bedroom where Demyx is and his breath catches and he runs over and he throws open the door and he can't

see anything in the darkness. He makes his way over to the bed by touch and he puts a hand out and he feels his brother's arm and his skin is warm beneath his hand and he breathes again and he lowers himself to the floor and puts his back to the bed and pulls his knees up to his chest and wraps his arms around them and shudders and stares at the window with its drapes drawn and keeps watch.

Demyx has his eyes open before the sun rises. He is aware of Roxas snoring softly from where he is curled up on the floor and he finds it surprising that he isn't surprised by it. He makes no move to wake his brother and instead watches the light rise in a line where the drapes don't meet exactly and stretch down the windowsill and slowly across the floor. There is a quiet in the air and he finds himself feeling peaceful, and yet not. There's something missing, or rather, there's something that isn't completed yet. He stares up at the ceiling and tries to figure out what it is. He is missing something, it is hovering just outside the edges of his attention. Roxas shifts on the floor but he doesn't wake.

The door cracks open and their mother steps in and she smiles softly when she sees Roxas and she steps over him carefully and puts a hand to Demyx's forehead and she looks happy.

"Patrzysz znacznie lepiej," She says and she brushes his hair back. "I nie miał tej nocy kaszlać."

Demyx smiles at her and he could tell her that he hadn't been coughing because he hasn't taken a breath since late last night but he decides against it and she leaves to get ready for work and he looks up at the ceiling again and waits for her to leave. He sits up as soon as he hears the door close and looks over at his brother. Roxas is on his side and he has one arm beneath his head and the other stretched out in front of him and he is sleeping soundly even though the floor can't be all that comfortable. Demyx knows what it is now, what is missing, undone and unfinished, and he steps gently onto the floor and stands up and leans over and picks his brother up and puts him on the bed. Roxas looks worried in his sleep and he mutters something but Demyx ruffles his hair and the boy relaxes and Demyx smiles and he turns around and gets his clothes out of the dresser and walks out of the room and closes the door behind him. He goes to the bathroom and cleans up and gets dressed.

He comes out of the bathroom and goes to the front door and puts his boots on and opens the door and goes out and closes the door behind him. He heads down the stairs slowly and listens to the sounds of the building as people are getting ready and heading out and waking up. Someone is frying up some eggs and someone else is making coffee and he can hear a clatter in the lower apartment where the young couple with their small children live and there is laughter inside and the shriek of a happy child. He reaches the bottom of the staircase and the main doors and he opens them and heads outside. He stops at the corner of the house and looks towards the gardens in back and he can see the ground out back is torn up by something and there is the lingering scent of smoke on the air but it is faded, like an echo. He heads on past the next house and there are paw prints and claw marks in the ground in front of it as well and in front of the next one too and he looks up and the moon has set but he can feel it anyway. He doesn't meet anyone on his way down the street and by the walls. There are birds singing above him as he heads out under the trees and down the path.

He steps off of the path and into the woods and walks between the trees to where he knows the stream runs. The water is clear and is running smooth and he stays at the edge of the stream and looks down into it. He doesn't seem himself and he doesn't see the surroundings reflected but he sees the water and the water is clean and pure. He walks along the stream for a little way and listens to the birds in the trees and the bubble of the water around various stones and reeds. He reaches the place where large stones form a makeshift bridge across the stream and he steps out onto them and stops in the middle and closes his eyes and listens to the water.

"Tak, idziesz??"

Demyx opens his eyes and sees that the red haired man is standing in front of him with his rifle slung over his shoulder and his hands in his pants pockets. His red hair is tousled and wild around his face and his eyes are glinting wickedly in the morning light. There are dark stains around the tattered holes in his shirt and the metal of his rifle is blackened and there are spots on his pants that look charred. Further behind him, half hidden in the shadows stands a man with strange blue hair, his dark uniform made darker in places with dirt and charring. His eyes are glowing a soft electric yellow. The air around the two men is charged, overloaded. There is darkness beyond them, coalescing clouds of futility and Demyx can see it visibly hanging around the base of the trees and reaching tendrils out towards the stream and the town beyond it. The stream, the stream, he can feel it now, flowing and curling and he knows what its purpose is, what his purpose is, and he can feel how far it curves and borders and separates the town from the wilds of the woods beyond it.

"Masz niewłaściwą osobę," Demyx says and he smiles and the red haired man barks a laugh.

"Wiem o tym, ale nie będzie nadchodzi, jest on?" The red haired man's eyes glint dangerously and his smile is sharp.

"Ja mu nie pozwolił," Demyx says and he thinks of his brother and he thinks of his mother and his town.

"Oczywiście. To dlatego, że tu jesteś, nawet jeśli nie jesteś stworzony do tego," The red haired man shifts his stance and pulls his hands out of his pockets and the man with the glowing eyes backs a little more into the shadows and his eyes gleam. "Więc chodź."

"Nie," Demyx says. He smiles and the red haired man frowns and the man with the glowing eyes growls. Demyx smiles because he knows he is doing the right thing because the red haired man looks angry now.

"Więc to jest to, co dajesz mi?" The red haired man's eyes seethe and there is a distinct smell of sulfur in the air.

"To jest to, co zasłużyłaś." Demyx answers although he doesn't know why those words come to mind. He still doesn't understand what the red haired man had wanted from him, not from that first meeting and not from that second meeting and not from any meeting they had. All he knows is that he can't let his brother fall to this and he can't let his mother suffer anymore than she already will be suffering and he can't let his town fall into the hands of the red haired man and his dog.

The man with the glowing eyes is silent and the red haired man is looking at Demyx and his eyes are mirrors again and then he is sliding the rifle strap off of his shoulder and pulls the bolt and readies the rifle.

"To, że wtedy," The red haired man raises the rifle and places the muzzle against Demyx's forehead and Demyx knows that the red haired man doesn't understand and that he isn't able to hear the water sing like Demyx does and he smiles and looks the red haired man straight in his mirror green eyes and the rifle discharges and the stream carries the pieces away.

There's a hyena in the woods. It prowls from shadow to shadow, hungry and searching. It has a collar, and they say the hand that holds the chain is the devil's itself.

It used to come out to the town at night, they say it used to wander from home to home, searching for anyone out too late. It doesn't come out from the woods now, it can't cross water like it used to.

If you go to the stream at night, that stream in the woods, they say you can see someone. He stands with his back towards the town, facing deeper into the woods. They say, as soon as you see him, he'll disappear, and if you try to look for him along the banks of the stream, eventually you'll end up at the path to the town again.

The hyena can't cross the stream now; they say the price that needed to be paid was paid in blood. If you go out during the day, they say you can see its paw prints all up and down the far side of the stream. The moon is always full in the woods, no matter what its phase is outside, and the hyena is always hungry.

And when the moon is full, really full, outside the woods too?

They say the stream runs red.